

BOOK REVIEW

SUZANNE LE-MAY SHEFFIELD. 2006. **Women and Science: Social Impact and Interaction.** (ISBN 978-0-8135-3737-5, hbk.). Rutgers University Press, 100 Joyce Kilmer Avenue, Piscataway, New Jersey 08854-8099, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.rutgerspress.rutgers.edu). \$29.95, 407 pp., numerous black/white images and biographical asides, 7" × 10".

Women and Science: Social Impact and Interaction is separated into seven chapters with an introduction on Marie Curie's influence on today's science. The book also includes an extensive section on resources that is divided into six distinct sections. These include a glossary, chronology, documents, bibliography, index, and author information.

This was a very interesting book that dives into the details of women's struggle in science throughout history. The author provides insight into how women received less education in the early 17th Century and were merely seen as aides to their husbands or partners. In the 18th Century, the role of women in science began to change. They were encouraged to learn science in hopes of advancing their abilities to socialize and teach their children proper science in the home. During this time many women became naturalists and took more interest in the world and science that surrounded them. One of the leading scientific topics that drew much attention from women was botany. Many books written by women at time pertained to plants and gardening. Women also gained access into the field of science by gaining honorary membership into particular social societies.

By the late 19th Century, much of the available education at the primary level was not adequate for women to compete at higher educational levels. Society allowed women to attend universities and sit in on lectures, but they were not allowed to receive doctorates in science. It wasn't until the 20th Century when it became more acceptable for women to be allowed to graduate with advanced degrees. During this time, the number of women interested in science and eager to seek degrees in this field grew exponentially. However, as the number of female scientists climbed, male counterparts erected barriers to staunch the advancement of women to the highest positions of science. There has been a decline in these barriers throughout time, and several stereotypes have been dissolved, allowing women mostly equal opportunities. But women today still face many struggles to obtain higher positions in science and to maintain their value there.

Sheffield's book is a great find for those interested in learning more about women's role in science and the history behind their struggles to compete and succeed in a man's world. The inclusion of historical asides on particular researchers and a chronological listing of important women in science enhanced the overall impact and utility of the book.—Keri McNew, MS Biology, Programs Manager, Botanical Research Institute of Texas, 500 East 4th Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-4025, U.S.A.